

Department of State

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO): FY 2018 International Visitor Leadership Program

Announcement Type: New Cooperative Agreement

Funding Opportunity Number: ECA-ECAPEV-18-001

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number: 19.402

Key Date/Application Deadline: July 13, 2017

Executive Summary: The Office of International Visitors, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA/PE/V), United States Department of State (DOS), announces an open competition for up to eight assistance awards to administer the FY 2018 International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP). Launched in 1940, the IVLP is a professional exchange program that seeks to build mutual understanding between the U.S. and other nations through carefully designed short-term visits to the U.S. for current and emerging leaders. These visits support U.S. foreign policy goals and reflect the participant's professional interests.

Applicants may submit only one proposal under this competition. If multiple proposals are received from the same applicant, all submissions will be declared ineligible and receive no further consideration in the review process.

It is the Bureau's intent to award up to eight cooperative agreements (one base year plus two non-competitive continuations) for an estimated total amount of \$49,500,000.

Please see section B.) Federal Award Information, below for additional details.

A. Program Description:

Overall grant-making authority for this program is contained in the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, Public Law 87-256, as amended, also known as the Fulbright-Hays Act. The purpose of the Act is "to enable the Government of the United States to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries...; to strengthen the ties which unite us with other nations by demonstrating the educational and cultural interests, developments, and achievements of the people of the United States and other nations...and thus to assist in the development of friendly, sympathetic and peaceful relations between the United States and the other countries of the world." The funding authority for the program above is provided through legislation.

Purpose: As the U.S. Department of State's premier professional exchange program, the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP), supports U.S. foreign policy goals and helps strengthen U.S. engagement with countries around the world. Through carefully designed projects, the IVLP provides current and emerging foreign leaders with firsthand knowledge of U.S. society, culture, and politics. In turn, Americans at all levels in communities across the United States have valuable opportunities to engage directly with these leaders and foster lasting relationships. IVLP participants are current or potential leaders in government, politics, media, education, science, non-government organizations, the arts, and other disciplines. They are nominated by officers at U.S. embassies overseas, approved by ECA/PE/V staff in Washington, D.C., and generally have little or no significant prior exposure to the United States. Since the IVLP's inception in 1940, more than 200,000 foreign leaders have participated in the program. More than 500 program alumni subsequently became chiefs of state or heads of government in their home countries.

All award recipients will develop professionally substantive and highly-customized projects that offer participants a well-balanced, well-paced, and varied experience in the United States. Please refer to the Program Objectives, Goals, and Implementation (POGI) document for a more detailed description of each type of project and the standard operating procedures for submission of proposals for each project.

The number of participants in each project and the length of the project will not be known to the award recipient until assignments have been completed by ECA/PE/V, following the announcement of the assistance awards. Over the past nine years, the IVLP has averaged 658 projects and 4,823 participants each year. It is the intent of the ECA/PE/V to allocate the FY 2018 projects to award recipients based on their internal capacity and cost effectiveness as detailed in their proposal. The goals and objectives for each specific IVLP project will be shared with the award recipients as they are assigned.

Award recipients will work closely with the responsible ECA/PE/V Project Manager throughout the development, implementation, and evaluation of each assigned IVLP project. These activities and the roles and responsibilities of the Department and award recipients are further clarified in the POGI.

Each project focuses on a substantive theme. Some typical IVLP projects themes are: border security; counterterrorism; democracy and human rights; economic and business development; education; sustainable development; government transparency and freedom of information; international crime; media; rule of law; science and technology; U.S. foreign policy; women's empowerment, and U.S. government and political systems; however, themes can change based on changes in foreign policy priorities during the period of performance.

In a cooperative agreement, ECA/PE/V is substantially involved in program activities above and beyond routine monitoring. These activities and the roles and responsibilities of the department and your organization are outlined in the attached POGI.

Guidelines:

Prospective award recipients should demonstrate their potential to develop projects with the following characteristics.

1. Projects must contain applicable meetings presented by experts which focus on foreign policy goals and project objectives. Meetings, site visits, and other activities should promote dialogue between participants and their U.S. professional counterparts. Projects must show the diverse viewpoints on the thematic topic.
2. Most projects will be 21 days in length and most will begin in Washington, D.C., with a program opening designed to provide an overview of the issue and a central examination of federal policies regarding the issue. Well-paced itineraries for each project usually include visits to three to five communities that are part of the Global Ties U.S. network. Project itineraries should provide opportunities for participants to experience the diversity of American society and culture as appropriate to the project theme.
3. Projects should provide opportunities for the participants to share a meal or similar experience (home hospitality) in the homes of Americans of diverse occupational, age, gender, and ethnic groups. Some individual and group projects might include an opportunity for an overnight stay (homestay) in an American home.
4. Projects should provide opportunities for participants to address student, civic and professional groups in relaxed and informal settings.
5. Participants should have appropriate opportunities for site visits and hands-on experiences that are relevant to project themes. The award recipient may propose professional “shadowing” experiences with U.S. professional colleagues for some projects (a typical shadowing experience means spending a half- or full-workday with a professional counterpart).
6. Projects should also allow time for participants to reflect on their experiences and share observations with project colleagues.
7. All award recipients must utilize the affiliates of Global Ties U.S. when building project itineraries. If no Global Ties U.S. affiliate exists in a community deemed vital for the success of the project, the award recipient may work with other local organizations in the community to arrange appropriate programming.

Qualifications: Applicants must demonstrate a minimum of four years of successful experience in coordinating international exchanges or they will be considered ineligible to receive an award under this NOFO. Reference C.3., Other Eligibility Requirements for additional information. Applicants must demonstrate the ability to develop and administer IVLP projects on all thematic areas. Reference E.1., Review Criteria.

1. The proposal should demonstrate a clear understanding of the work to be undertaken and outline the responsibilities of all key personnel involved. The proposal should set forth in detail the award recipient's management approach and a work plan/timeframe. All proposals must contain a sound management plan to carry out the volume of work outlined in the POGI.
2. Applicant organizations must include a proposed budget and identify the number of visitors the proposed funding level will support. The budget for this award is solely for the organizational structure and administrative costs associated with implementation of the assigned IVLP projects. All project level costs will be funded through a separate mechanism, following the announcement of the assistance awards and assignment of projects by ECA/PE/V.
3. Proposals should consider all potential cost savings. The proposed budget should clearly identify the staffing requirements to implement the proposed number of projects and participants. It is highly recommended to develop a model that is scalable to accommodate actual funding and the assigned projects and participants, including the use of seasonal staff teams during particularly busy months of the IVLP cycle.
4. Proposals must demonstrate an applicant's broad knowledge of international relations; U.S. foreign policy issues; and knowledge of the United States and U.S. domestic issues.
5. All award recipients must have a Washington, D.C. area presence with a physical office and staff members located within the Washington D.C. area. Applicants who do not currently have a Washington, D.C. metropolitan area presence must include a detailed plan in their proposal for establishing such a presence by December 31, 2017. The costs related to establishing such a presence must be borne by the award recipient and no such costs may be included in the budget submission in this proposal.
6. Proposals must demonstrate that the applicant has an established resource base of programming contacts and the ability to keep this resource base continuously updated for Washington, D.C. metropolitan area based meetings. This resource base should include speakers, thematic specialists, and practitioners in a wide range of professional fields in both the private and public sectors.

7. All proposals must demonstrate sound financial management and appropriate internal financial controls.
8. Award recipients with the ability to generate program income must be mindful that program income earned during the project period shall be retained by the recipient, in accordance with the awarding agency's regulations or the terms and conditions of the award, and used in one or more of the ways listed below:
 - (1) Added to funds committed to the project by the federal awarding agency and recipient and used to further eligible project or program objectives;
 - (2) Used to finance the non-federal share of the project or program; and/or
 - (3) Deducted from the total project or program allowable cost in determining the net allowable costs on which the federal share of costs is based.
9. Applicants must have the ability to implement a direct billing payment system with hotels in the Washington, DC metropolitan area and across the United States for all IVLP projects.
10. Proposals must include a detailed description of the organization's social media strategy, highlighting efforts to use social media to enhance the overall goals of the IVLP.
11. The award recipient must have the capability to electronically communicate through ORDIV (Online Resource Directory for International Visitors), the web-based application that allows award recipients to record and share data electronically with the Global Ties U.S. network. The application produces national program books and other supporting documents (e.g., appointment requests and confirmations, participant welcome letters, and mailing labels) by allowing users to export data through Microsoft Word or Excel.

Requirements for Past Performance References:

In addition to Letters of Endorsement, DOS will also use past performance as an indicator of an applicant's ability to successfully perform the work under the Institutional Capacity review criterion (Reference section E.1). A separate and clearly labeled attachment of the proposal must contain any letters of endorsement and between three and five references who may be called upon to discuss recently completed or ongoing work performed for professional exchange programs (which may include the IVLP). The reference must contain the information outlined below.

Please note that Bureau grant guidelines require that organizations with less than four years of experience in conducting international exchanges be limited to \$130,000 in Bureau funding. This requirement would also apply to all proposed subaward recipients when the total estimated cost of the sub-award is over \$130,000.

At a minimum, applicants must provide the following information for each reference:

- Name of the reference organization
- Project name
- Project description
- Performance period of the contract, cooperative agreement, or grant
- Amount of the contract, cooperative agreement, or grant
- Technical contact person and telephone number for referenced organization
- Administrative contact person and telephone number for referenced organization.

The DOS may contact representatives from the organizations cited in the examples to obtain information on the applicant's past performance. The DOS also may obtain past performance information from sources other than those identified by the applicant.

Personnel: Applicants must include complete and current resumes of key personnel and any individuals who will be working full-time on the IVLP. If individuals are not full-time employees, indicate the percentage of their time spent on the IVLP. Indicate whether seasonal employees or other staffing methods will be used to respond to fluctuations in programming levels throughout the year. A staffing list should include job titles, salary level, and years of service with the organization. Resumes should be included in the submission under Additional Information to Be Submitted in the GrantSolutions Application Control Checklist. Each resume is limited to no more than two pages per person.

Please identify the individuals you have included in your staffing list that your organization designates as key personnel. Key personnel are those individuals who have direct responsibility for the cooperative agreement and whose absence directly effects the continuation or provision of services under the cooperative agreement.

During the course of your cooperative agreement, you will be required to obtain prior approval for any changes, prolonged absences, or significant adjustments for any individuals on this key personnel list.

Budget Guidelines: Applicants are required to submit a comprehensive line-item administrative budget in accordance with the instructions in the Solicitation Package (Proposal Submission Instructions.) The submission must include a summary budget and a detailed budget showing all administrative costs. Proposed staffing and costs associated with staffing must be appropriate to the requirements outlined in the NOFO and in the Solicitation Package. Cost sharing is encouraged and should be shown in the budget presentation. Applicants must prove fiscal management integrity. Please refer to the Solicitation Package for complete budget guidelines and formatting instructions.

All liaisons shall be with the designated elements of the DOS relative to the following responsibilities incurred by the recipient under this agreement:

- A. Program Administration – Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Office of International Visitors, ECA/PE/V
- B. Financial – Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Grants Division, ECA-IIP/EX/G.

Proposal narratives should include a brief commitment to implement the program for the base year, plus two additional non-competitive continuations (NCC) (formerly referred to as option years), pending successful performance and the availability of funds. The narrative should focus on details specific to the implementation of the base year program, with the understanding that the program design, duration and participant numbers would be similar when/if the subsequent two non-competitive continuations are exercised. ECA will perform an annual performance evaluation/review to determine if a non-competitive continuation will be exercised. Satisfactory performance is a condition of continued administration of the program and execution of all non-competitive continuations.

B. Federal Award Information:

Type of Award: Cooperative Agreement

ECA's level of involvement in this program is listed under A. Program Description above.

Fiscal Year Funds:

- FY 2018 - Base Year: \$16,500,000, pending the availability of funds;
- FY 2019 – NCC year-one: \$16,500,000, pending successful performance and the availability of funds, and
- FY 2020 – NCC year-two: \$16,500,000, pending successful performance and the availability of funds.

Approximate Total Funding: \$49, 500,000. This figure represents the maximum funding for up to eight awards each to include: base year plus two additional Non-Competitive Continuation years, pending successful performance and the availability of funds.

Approximate Number of Awards: Up to eight awards

Floor of Award Range: \$640,000

Ceiling of Award Range: \$6,600,000

Approximate Average Award: \$2,100,000

Anticipated Award Date: Pending the availability of funds, January 1, 2018.

Anticipated Project Completion Date: December 31, 2020 - This date reflects the anticipated duration of the award – one base year plus two additional non-competitive continuations (NCC).

Additional Information:

A cooperative agreement(s) will be awarded for a period of 12 months (base year) with non-competitive continuations for two additional 12 month periods (non-competitive continuation years one and two). ECA will notify the recipient of our intention to exercise or not to exercise a non-competitive continuation at least 90 days in advance of expiration of the current year after an internal evaluation of the recipient's performance. The decision to exercise a non-competitive continuation will depend both on the satisfactory performance of the recipient and the availability of funds. ECA reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with needs of the program and the availability of funds.

C.) Eligibility Information:

C.1. Eligible applicants: Applications may be submitted by U.S. public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3).

C.2. Cost Sharing or Matching Funds: The Bureau encourages applicants to provide maximum levels of cost sharing and funding in support of its programs. When cost sharing is offered, it is understood and agreed that the applicant must provide the amount of cost sharing as stipulated in its proposal and later included in an approved agreement. Cost sharing may be in the form of allowable direct or indirect costs. For accountability, you must maintain written records to support all costs which are claimed as your contribution, as well as costs to be paid by the Federal government. Such records are subject to audit. The basis for determining the value of cash and in-kind contributions must be in accordance with the Office of Management and Budget's Guidance 2 CFR Parts 200 and 600, entitled the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards. In the event you do not provide the minimum amount of cost sharing as stipulated in the approved budget, ECA's contribution will be reduced in like proportion.

C.3. Other Eligibility Requirements:

a.) Bureau grant guidelines require that organizations with less than four years of experience in conducting international exchanges be limited to \$130,000 in Bureau funding. ECA anticipates making up to eight awards, with a minimum award amount of \$640,000 pending the availability of FY 2018 funds, to support administrative costs required to implement this exchange program. Therefore, organizations with less than four years' experience in conducting international exchanges are ineligible to apply under this competition.

b.) Technical Eligibility: All proposals must comply with the following: technical eligibility requirements specified in the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) and the Project Objectives, Goals, and Implementation (POGI) documents or they will result in your proposal being declared technically ineligible and given no further consideration in the review process.

- Eligible applicants may not submit more than one proposal in this competition. If more than one proposal is received from the same applicant, all submissions will be declared technically ineligible and will receive no further consideration in the review process.

Please note: Applicant organizations are defined by their legal name, and EIN number as stated on their completed SF-424 and additional supporting documentation outlined in the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) document.

D.) Application and Submission Information:

Note: Please read the complete announcement before sending inquiries or submitting proposals. Once the NOFO deadline has passed, Bureau staff may not discuss this competition with applicants until the proposal review process has been completed.

D.1 Contact Information to Request an Application Package:

Patricia Johnson, Community Relations Branch, Office of International Visitors, ECA/PE/V/C/R, SA-5, 3rd Floor, U.S. Department of State, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20037, (202) 632-3288, or email JohnsonPA2@state.gov or Tom Rathburn at (202)632-9384 or email RathburnTG@ state.gov to request a Solicitation Package and refer to the Funding Opportunity Number located at the top of this announcement .

The Solicitation Package contains the Proposal Submission Instruction (PSI) document which consists of required application forms, and standard guidelines for proposal preparation.

It also contains the Project Objectives, Goals and Implementation (POGI) document, which provides specific information, award criteria and budget instructions tailored to this competition.

D.2.To Download a Solicitation Package Via Internet:

The entire Solicitation Package may be downloaded from the Bureau's website at <http://eca.state.gov/organizational-funding> or from the Grants.gov website at <http://www.grants.gov>.

Please read all information before downloading.

D.2a. Content and Form of Submission: Applicants must follow all instructions in the Solicitation Package. The application should be submitted per the instructions under

D.3. “Application Deadline and Method of Submission” section below:

D.3a. You are required to have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number to apply for a grant or cooperative agreement from the U.S. Government. This number is a nine-digit identification number, which uniquely identifies business entities. Obtaining a UEI number is easy and there is no charge. To obtain a UEI number, access <http://www.dnb.com> or call 1-866-705-5711. Please ensure that your UEI (DUNS) number is included in the appropriate box of the SF – 424 which is part of the formal application package.

D.3b. All proposals must contain an executive summary, proposal narrative, and budget.

Please Refer to the Solicitation Package. It contains the mandatory Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) document and the Project Objectives, Goals and Implementation (POGI) document for additional formatting and technical requirements.

D.3c. All federal award applicants must be registered in the System for Award Management (SAM) database in order to submit a proposal in response to an open competition on Grants.gov.

All federal award recipients must maintain current registrations in the SAM database. Recipients must maintain accurate and up-to-date information in www.SAM.gov until all program and financial activity and reporting have been completed. Recipients must review and update the information at least annually after the initial registration and more frequently if required information changes or another award is granted. There is no cost associated with registering or updating SAM.gov accounts. Failure to register in SAM.gov will render applicants ineligible to receive funding.

D.3d. You must have nonprofit status with the IRS at the time of application. **Please note:** Effective January 7, 2009, all applicants for ECA federal assistance awards must include in their application the names of directors and/or senior executives (current officers, trustees, and key employees, regardless of amount of compensation). In fulfilling this requirement, applicants must submit information in one of the following ways:

- 1) Those who file Internal Revenue Service Form 990, "Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax," must include a copy of relevant portions of this form.
- 2) Those who do not file IRS Form 990 must submit information above in the format of their choice.

D.3e. In addition to final program reporting requirements, award recipients will also be required to submit a one-page document, derived from their program reports, listing and describing their grant activities.

For award recipients, the names of directors and/or senior executives (current officers, trustees, and key employees), as well as the one- page description of grant activities, will be transmitted by the State Department to OMB, along with other information required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), and will be made available to the public by the Office of Management and Budget on its USASpending.gov website as part of ECA's FFATA reporting requirements.

D.3f. If your organization is a private nonprofit which has not received a grant or cooperative agreement from ECA in the past three years, or if your organization received nonprofit status from the IRS within the past four years, you must submit the necessary documentation to verify nonprofit status as directed in the PSI document. Failure to do so will cause your proposal to be declared technically ineligible.

D.3g. **All ECA awards recipient organizations** must be registered with GrantSolutions by accessing www.GrantSolutions.gov. To register as a first time user of GrantSolutions, please scroll to the bottom of the home page and click “Getting Started-Request a User Account” at <http://home.grantsolutions.gov/home/home/customer-support/getting-started/>. Organizations that have previously used GrantSolutions do not need to register again. If the organization is not able to access the system, please contact GrantSolutions.gov Help Desk for help in gaining access.

Support for Grantee Organizations is available from 8 AM – 6 PM Washington, DC time, Monday – Friday and can be reached at help@grantsolutions.gov or 1-866-577-0771.

Please take into consideration the following information when preparing your proposal narrative:

D.3h. ADHERENCE TO ALL REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE J VISA:

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs places critically important emphases on the security and proper administration of the Exchange Visitor (J visa) Programs and adherence by award recipients and sponsors to all regulations governing the J visa. Therefore, proposals should demonstrate the applicant's capacity to meet all requirements governing the administration of the Exchange Visitor Programs as set forth in 22 CFR 62, including the oversight of Responsible Officers and Alternate Responsible Officers, screening and selection of program participants, provision of pre-arrival information and orientation to participants, monitoring of participants, proper maintenance and security of forms, record-keeping, reporting and other requirements.

ECA will be responsible for issuing DS-2019 forms to participants in this program.

A copy of the complete regulations governing the administration of Exchange Visitor (J) programs is available at <http://j1visa.state.gov> or from:

Office of Designation, Private Sector Programs Division

U.S. Department of State
 SA-44, Suite 668
 301 4th Street, SW
 Washington, DC 20547

Please refer to Solicitation Package for further information.

D.3i. Diversity, Freedom and Democracy Guidelines: Pursuant to the Bureau's authorizing legislation, programs must maintain a non-political character and should be balanced and representative of the diversity of political, social, and cultural life in the United States and abroad. 'Diversity' should be interpreted in the broadest sense and encompass differences including race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, geographic location, socio-economic status, disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity. Proposals should demonstrate how diversity will enhance the program's goals and objectives and the participants' exchange experience. Please refer to the review criteria under the 'Support of Diversity' section of this document as well as the DIVERSITY, FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY section in the "Proposal Submission Instructions" document for specific suggestions on incorporating diversity into the total proposal.

Public Law 104-319 provides that "in carrying out programs of educational and cultural exchange in countries whose people do not fully enjoy freedom and democracy," the Bureau "shall take appropriate steps to provide opportunities for participation in such programs to human rights and democracy leaders of such countries." Public Law 106 - 113 requires that the governments of the countries described above do not have inappropriate influence in the selection process. Proposals should reflect advancement of these goals in their program contents, to the full extent deemed feasible.

D.3j. Program Monitoring and Evaluation: Proposals must include a plan to monitor and evaluate the project's success, both as the activities unfold and at the end of the program. The Bureau recommends that your proposal include a draft survey questionnaire or other technique plus a description of a methodology to use to link outcomes to original project objectives. The Bureau expects that the recipient organization will track participants or partners and be able to respond to key evaluation questions, including satisfaction with the program, learning as a result of the program, changes in behavior as a result of the program, and effects of the program on institutions (institutions in which participants work or partner institutions). The evaluation plan should include indicators that measure gains in mutual understanding as well as substantive knowledge.

Successful monitoring and evaluation depend heavily on setting clear goals and outcomes at the outset of a program. Your evaluation plan should include a description of your project's objectives, your anticipated project outcomes, and how and when you intend to measure these outcomes (performance indicators). The more that outcomes are "smart" (specific, measurable, attainable, results-oriented, and placed in a reasonable time frame),

the easier it will be to conduct the evaluation. You should also show how your project objectives link to the goals of the program described in this NOFO.

Your monitoring and evaluation plan should clearly distinguish between program outputs and outcomes. Outputs are products and services delivered, often stated as an amount. Output information is important to show the scope or size of project activities, but it cannot substitute for information about progress towards outcomes or the results achieved. Examples of outputs include the number of people trained or the number of seminars conducted. Outcomes, in contrast, represent specific results a project is intended to achieve and is usually measured as an extent of change. Findings on outputs and outcomes should both be reported, but the focus should be on outcomes.

We encourage you to assess the following four levels of outcomes, as they relate to the program goals set out in the NOFO (listed here in increasing order of importance):

1. **Participant satisfaction** with the program and exchange experience.
2. **Participant learning**, such as increased knowledge, aptitude, skills, and changed understanding and attitude. Learning includes both substantive (subject-specific) learning and mutual understanding.
3. **Participant behavior**, such as concrete actions to apply knowledge in work or community; greater participation and responsibility in civic organizations; interpretation and explanation of experiences and new knowledge gained; continued contacts between participants, community members, and others.
4. **Institutional changes**, such as increased collaboration and partnerships, policy reforms, new programming, and organizational improvements.

Please note: Consideration should be given to the appropriate timing of data collection for each level of outcome. For example, satisfaction is usually captured as a short-term outcome, whereas behavior and institutional changes are normally considered longer-term outcomes.

Overall, the quality of your monitoring and evaluation plan will be judged on how well it 1) specifies intended outcomes; 2) gives clear descriptions of how each outcome will be measured; 3) identifies when particular outcomes will be measured; and 4) provides a clear description of the data collection strategies for each outcome (i.e., surveys, interviews, or focus groups). (Please note that evaluation plans that deal only with the first level of outcomes [satisfaction] will be deemed less competitive under the present evaluation criteria.)

Recipient organizations will be required to provide reports analyzing their evaluation findings to the Bureau in their regular program reports. All data collected, including survey responses and contact information, must be maintained for a minimum of three years and provided to the Bureau upon request.

D.3k. Virtual Exchange Component: ECA welcomes innovative ideas on how organizations can leverage appropriate mobile and/or online technologies to maintain engagement among exchange participants, encourage project collaboration and widen participation in the overall project to a broader audience. ECA strongly encourages organizations submitting proposals in response to this solicitation to suggest one or more virtual exchange components to complement the in-person exchange. The virtual exchange component(s) could come before, during and/or after the physical exchange. The objective for the virtual exchange component(s), defined as technology-enabled, sustainable, people-to-people, cross-cultural exchanges, is to augment the impact of the in-person exchange described in this solicitation. ECA encourages organizations to propose virtual exchange ideas that take advantage of ECA's existing web and social networking platforms, including our [International Exchange Alumni](#) space. Virtual exchange components would be coordinated with and approved by the ECA program office and U.S. missions abroad on a project by project basis.

D.3l. Communications Guidance for ECA Grant Recipients: All ECA Grant Recipients must adhere to the requirements in [ECA's Communications Guidance](#) on the creation of program branding and attribution, websites, social media, and press.

D.3m. Please take the following information into consideration when preparing your budget:

D.3n. Applicants must submit SF-424A – “Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs” along with a comprehensive budget for the entire program. There must be a summary budget for all administrative items to provide clarification.

For competitions that will be renewed through a Non-Competitive Continuation applicants must submit:

- the SF-424A which must include the budget request amount for the base-year of the program;
- a detailed proposal narrative and budget for the base year of funding (Please refer to the Proposal Submission Instruction Document (PSI) for general budget guidance.). The narrative should also include a brief commitment to implement the program for the base year, plus two additional non-competitive continuation years, pending successful program performance and availability of funds; and
- an abbreviated/estimated summary budget presenting the total projected administrative and program costs for the anticipated total duration of programming (base year, plus two non-competitive continuation years).

To exercise the Non-Competitive Continuation mechanism the recipient will be required to submit:

1. timely quarterly performance and financial reports;
2. a request in writing to ECA at least 90 days in advance of the expiration of the current program year;

3. a summary budget that projects program expenses through the end of the current year;
4. a detailed budget outlining both administrative and program expenses for the requested non-competitive continuation year; and
5. a brief narrative to support the continuation of the award.

The ECA Grants Officer and Grants Officer Representative will:

1.) Closely monitor the recipient's performance through site visits, desk audits, mandatory quarterly performance and financial reports, consultations, and other forms of communication and dialogue before exercising additional non-competitive continuations. (Additional details regarding monitoring and oversight of the program by ECA representatives will be provided at the time the base-year award is made.)

- 2.) Review and evaluate all mandatory quarterly program and financial reports;
 - All program and financial reporting requirements must be current and up-to-date before the Bureau will exercise additional non-competitive continuations.
 - Any/all concerns, issues, or modifications requested by the Grants Officer or Project Manager to the original program design or method of implementation must be responded to in writing.
 - The ECA Grants Officer and Project Manager will review and advise of ECA's approval or disapproval of the response before issuing subsequent non-competitive continuations.
- 3.) Prior Grants Officer approval is required to carry forward an unobligated balance from a prior funding period to the subsequent funding period. If the Grants Officer determines that some or all of the unobligated funds are not necessary to perform the program activity, the Grants Officer may decline the Recipient's request to carry forward the unobligated balance.

The Grants Officer may, at their discretion, use the unobligated balance to reduce or offset future funding for a subsequent funding period. An unobligated balance at the end of a funding period is not sufficient justification to carry forward funds. A final determination and approval to carry forward any funds will be communicated via a cost amendment with adjustment, if any, to new obligation amounts.

- i. The request to carry forward an unobligated balance must include:
 - a. A brief narrative why funds remain unobligated and how the unobligated funds will be used to complete the previously approved goals and objectives of the program; and,
 - b. A detailed budget that reflects the amount of unobligated funds to date, and anticipated expenditures in the subsequent period of performance for all cost categories under the authorized budget.

D.3o. Allowable administrative costs for the program include the following:

- 1) Staff Salaries and Benefits;
- 2) Office and Program Supplies;
- 3) Telephone and Communications;
- 4) Staff Travel and Per Diem (only for activities authorized by ECA/PE/V)
- 5) Automatic Data Processing Equipment Maintenance and IT Costs;
- 6) Indirect Costs.

Please refer to the Solicitation Package for complete budget guidelines and formatting instructions. All project-level costs will be funded through another mechanism once an assistance award is issued.

D.3p. Application Deadline and Method of Submission:

Application Deadline Date: Thursday, July 13, 2017

Method of Submission:

Applications may only be submitted electronically through Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>). Complete solicitation packages are available at Grants.gov in the "Find" portion of the system.

PLEASE NOTE: ECA bears no responsibility for applicant timeliness of submission or data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes for proposals submitted via Grants.gov.

Please follow the instructions available in the 'Get Started' portion of the site (<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html>).

Several of the steps in the Grants.gov registration process could take several weeks. Therefore, applicants should check with appropriate staff within their organizations immediately after reviewing this NOFO to confirm or determine their registration status with Grants.gov.

Once registered, the amount of time it can take to upload an application will vary depending on a variety of factors including the size of the application and the speed of your internet connection. In addition, validation of an electronic submission via Grants.gov can take up to two business days.

Therefore, we strongly recommend that you not wait until the application deadline to begin the submission process through Grants.gov.

The Grants.gov website includes extensive information on all phases/aspects of the Grants.gov process, including an extensive section on frequently asked questions, located under the "For Applicants" section of the website. ECA strongly recommends that all potential applicants review thoroughly the Grants.gov website, well in advance of submitting a proposal through the Grants.gov system.

Direct all questions regarding Grants.gov registration and submission to:

Grants.gov Customer Support

Contact Center Phone: 800 -518-4726

Business Hours: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week; closed on federal holidays

Email: support@grants.gov

Applicants have until midnight (12:00 a.m.), Washington, DC time of the closing date to ensure that their entire application has been uploaded to the Grants.gov site. There are no exceptions to the above deadline. Applications uploaded to the site after midnight of the application deadline date will be automatically rejected by the Grants.gov system, and will be technically ineligible.

Please refer to the Grants.gov website, for definitions of various "application statuses" and the difference between a submission receipt and a submission validation. Applicants will receive a validation e-mail from Grants.gov upon the successful submission of an application. Again, validation of an electronic submission via Grants.gov can take up to two business days. Therefore, we strongly recommend that you not wait until the application deadline to begin the submission process through Grants.gov. ECA will not notify you upon receipt of electronic applications.

It is the responsibility of all applicants submitting proposals via the Grants.gov web portal to ensure that proposals have been received by Grants.gov in their entirety, and ECA bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes.

D.3q. Intergovernmental Review of Applications: Executive Order 12372 does not apply to this program.

E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION:

The Bureau will review all proposals for technical eligibility. Proposals will be deemed ineligible if they do not fully adhere to the guidelines stated herein and in the Solicitation Package. All eligible proposals will be reviewed by the program office, as well as the Public Diplomacy section overseas and State Department regional bureaus, where appropriate. Eligible proposals will be subject to compliance with Federal and Bureau regulations and guidelines and forwarded to Bureau grant panels for advisory review. Proposals may also be reviewed by the Office of the Legal Adviser or by other Department elements. All awards will be assessed for risk prior to their issuance. Final funding decisions are at the discretion of the Department of State's Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs. Final technical authority for assistance awards resides with the Bureau's Grants Officer.

E.1. REVIEW CRITERIA:

Technically eligible applications will be competitively reviewed according to the criteria stated below. These criteria are not rank ordered and all carry equal weight in the proposal evaluation:

1. **Evidence of Understanding/Program Planning:** Proposals should convey that the applicant has a good understanding of the overall goals and objectives of the IVLP. Proposals should contain a detailed and relevant work plan that demonstrates originality, substance, and precision in developing projects, and be responsive to the requirements stated in this NOFO and the corresponding POGI.
2. **Support of Diversity:** Proposals should demonstrate support of the Bureau's commitment to promoting the awareness and understanding of diversity. Pursuant to the Bureau's authorizing legislation, programs must maintain a non-partisan character and should be balanced and representative of the diversity of American political, social, and cultural life. "Diversity" should be interpreted in the broadest sense and encompass differences including, but not limited to ethnicity, race, gender, religion, geographic location, socio-economic status, and disabilities. It is important that proposals have a clearly articulated diversity plan and not simply express general support for the concept of diversity.
3. **Institutional Capacity:** Proposals should clearly demonstrate the applicant's capability for performing the type of work required by the IVLP and how the institution will execute activities to meet the goals of the program. The proposal should reflect the applicant's ability to design and implement, in a timely and creative manner, professional exchange programs which encompass a variety of project themes. The applicant must demonstrate the potential for programming IVLP participants from all regions of the world. The proposal should demonstrate successful experience in conducting professional exchange programs similar in nature and magnitude to the scope of work outlined in this solicitation. Applicants must demonstrate how their organizations will effectively consult with Bureau Project Managers on a regular basis to ensure that the assigned projects will consistently meet program objectives. Proposals must demonstrate an institutional record of responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements.
4. **Project Evaluation:** While award recipients do not have sole responsibility for program evaluation, proposals should describe how the award recipient will evaluate the activity's success, both as the activities unfold and through required reporting at the conclusion of projects, and address how lessons learned will be incorporated in future project planning. A description of the methodology used to link outcomes to original project objectives is strongly recommended. Applicants should also indicate how they will evaluate their project management.
5. **Cost-effectiveness and Cost Sharing:** The overhead and administrative components of the proposal, including salaries and honoraria, should be kept as low as possible. All other items should be necessary and appropriate. Proposals should maximize cost-sharing through other private sector support as well as institutional direct funding contributions.

F.) Federal Award Administration Information:

F.1. Award Notices:

Final awards cannot be made until funds have been appropriated by Congress, allocated and committed through internal Bureau procedures. Successful applicants will receive a Federal Assistance Award (FAA) from the Bureau's Grants Office. The FAA and the original proposal with subsequent modifications (if applicable) shall be the only binding authorizing document between the recipient and the U.S. Government. The FAA will be signed by an authorized Grants Officer, and transmitted to the recipient's responsible officer identified in the application.

Unsuccessful applicants will receive notification of the results of the application review from the ECA program office coordinating this competition.

The following additional requirements apply to this project.

For assistance awards involving Iran:

A critical component of current U.S. government Iran policy is the support for indigenous Iranian voices. The State Department has made the awarding of grants for this purpose a key component of its Iran policy. As a condition of licensing these activities, the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) has requested the Department of State to follow certain procedures to effectuate the goals of Sections 481(b), 531(a), 571, 582, and 635(b) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (as amended); 18 U.S.C. §§ 2339A and 2339B; Executive Order 13224; and Homeland Security Presidential Directive 6. These licensing conditions mandate that the Department conduct a vetting of potential Iran grantees and sub-grantees for counter-terrorism purposes. To conduct this vetting the Department will collect information from grantees and sub-grantees regarding the identity and background of their key employees and Boards of Directors.

Note: To assure that planning for the inclusion of Iran complies with requirements, please contact (Sana Abed-Kotob at 202-632-9380 or Abed-KotobS@state.gov.) for additional information.

Prohibition on the use of Federal Funds to Promote, Support, or advocate for the legalization or practice of Prostitution.

The U.S. Government is opposed to prostitution and related activities, which are inherently harmful and dehumanizing, and contribute to the phenomenon of trafficking in persons. None of the funds made available under this agreement may be used to promote, support, or advocate the legalization or practice of prostitution. Nothing in the preceding sentence shall be construed to preclude assistance designed to ameliorate the suffering of, or health risks to, victims while they are being trafficked or after they are out of the situation that resulted from such victims being trafficked.

The recipient shall insert the foregoing provision in all sub-agreements under this award.

This provision includes express terms and conditions of the agreement and any violation of it shall be grounds for unilateral termination of the agreement by the Department of State prior to the end of its term.

For assistance awards involving the Palestinian Authority, West Bank, and Gaza:

All awards made under this competition must be executed according to all relevant U.S. laws and policies regarding assistance to the Palestinian Authority, and to the West Bank and Gaza. Organizations must consult with relevant Public Affairs Offices before entering into any formal arrangements or agreements with Palestinian organizations or institutions.

Note: To assure that planning for the inclusion of the Palestinian Authority complies with requirements, please (Sana Abed-Kotob at 202-632-9380 or Abed-KotobS@state.gov.) for additional information.

F.2 Administrative and National Policy Requirements:

Terms and Conditions for the Administration of ECA agreements include the following: Office of Management and Budget's Guidance 2 CFR Parts 200 and 600, entitled the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Effective December 26, 2014, replacing the previous circulars).

For a copy of the OMB Guidance cited, please contact the U.S. Government Publishing Office or download from the www.ecfr.gov website.

Please reference the following websites for additional information:

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb>
<https://www.statebuy.state.gov/fa/pages/home.aspx>

F.3. Reporting Requirements: You must provide ECA with an electronic copy of the following required reports:

Mandatory:

- 1.) Additional performance reports shall not be required more frequently than quarterly or, less frequently than annually. Annual reports shall be due 90 calendar days after the grant year; quarterly or semi-annual reports shall be due 30 days after the reporting period. (Frequency of these reports will be determined by the Grants Officer and Project Manager). A SF-PPR, "Performance Progress Report" Cover Sheet must be submitted with all programmatic reports and can be found here: http://aopefa.a.state.gov/content.asp?content_id=20&menu_id=68. The complete report and supporting documentation must be uploaded by the Recipient as a *Grant Note* under the corresponding record for this Agreement in GrantSolutions.gov. For assistance, please contact the GrantSolutions Help Desk at 1 (866) 577-0771 (toll free for US callers) or by email at

help@grantsolutions.gov. The Federal Financial Report (FFR SF-425/SF-425a) must be submitted through the Payment Management System (PMS). The electronic version of the FFR can be accessed at: <http://www.dpm.psc.gov/>. Once a financial report has been approved by the Department, the Recipient must upload the approved report to [GrantSolutions.gov](http://www.grantsolutions.gov), in the same manner specified for the programmatic reports. Failure to comply with these reporting requirements may jeopardize the Recipient's eligibility for future Agreements.

- 2.) A final program and financial report no more than 90 days after the expiration or termination of the award;
- 3.) A concise, one-page final program report summarizing program outcomes no more than 90 days after the expiration of the award. This report should be e-mailed to: FFATAECA@state.gov. This one-page report will be transmitted to OMB, and be made available to the public via OMB's USAspending.gov website - as part of ECA's Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) reporting requirements.
- 4.) Because the Competition will allow for the exercise of Non-Competitive Continuations (NCC) (formerly referred to as Option Years), applicants must be placed on a mandatory quarterly program and financial reporting cycle. The due dates for these reports will be included in the final assistance award document. The program and financial reports must demonstrate substantial progress by addressing progress towards the original approved goals and objectives, relative activities and events, and supporting fiscal data. The reports will be reviewed by both the assigned Grant Officer and Project Manager.
- 5.) Quarterly financial reports within fifteen days following the end of the calendar year quarter. These reports should itemize separately: IVLP Division visitor costs, IVLP Division group enhancements costs, Multi-Regional project visitor costs, Multi-Regional project group enhancement costs, IVLP On Demand visitor costs and group enhancements, reasonable accommodation costs, Interpreter/International Visitor Liaison costs, special project costs by projects, and administrative costs for the previous quarter.
- 6.) The quarterly financial reports should also list separately the number of participants for IVLP Division, IVLP On Demand Division and Multi-Regional projects. Interpreters/International Visitor Liaisons accompanying IVLP Division participants, and the number of Interpreters/International Visitor Liaisons accompanying IVLP On Demand participants for whom funds are expended. Quarterly financial reports must be certified by the award recipient's chief financial officer or an officer of comparable rank. For further information, please refer to the Project Objectives, Goals, and Implementation (POGI) document.
- 7.) Other reports including but not limited to operating, statistical, and financial information relating to the program as may be requested by ECA/PE/V.

Award recipients will be required to provide reports analyzing their evaluation findings to the Bureau in their regular program reports. (Please refer to D.3j. Program Monitoring and Evaluation information.)

All data collected, including survey responses and contact information, must be maintained for a minimum of three years and provided to the Bureau upon request.

F.4. Program Data Requirements:

Award recipients will be required to maintain specific data on program participants and activities in an electronically accessible database format that can be shared with the Bureau as required. At a minimum, the data must include the following:

- 1) Name, address, contact information and biographic sketch of all persons who travel internationally on funds provided by the agreement or who benefit from the award funding but do not travel.
- 2) Itineraries of international and domestic travel, providing dates of travel and cities in which any exchange experiences take place. Final schedules for in-country and U.S. activities must be received by the ECA Project Manager no later than 3:00pm one business day prior to the project opening.

G. Agency Contacts:

For questions about this announcement, contact: Patricia Johnson, U.S. Department of State, Office of International Visitors, ECA/PE/V, SA-5, 3rd Floor, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037, (202) 632-3288 and fax (202) 632-9393, or by e-mail at JohnsonPA2@state.gov or Tom Rathburn at (202)632-9384 or email RathburnTG@state.gov.

All correspondence with the Bureau concerning this NOFO should reference the title and funding opportunity number listed at the top of this solicitation.

Please read the complete announcement before sending inquiries or submitting proposals. Once the NOFO deadline has passed, Bureau staff may not discuss this competition with applicants until the proposal review process has been completed.

H. Other Information:**Notice:**

The terms and conditions published in this NOFO are binding and may not be modified by any Bureau representative. Explanatory information provided by the Bureau that contradicts published language will not be binding. Issuance of the NOFO does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government. The Bureau reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds. Awards made will be subject to periodic reporting and evaluation requirements per section F3. Reporting Requirements above.

Mark Taplin
Acting Assistant Secretary for
Educational and Cultural Affairs
U.S. Department of State

May 10, 2017